



## Translation of Proper Names in *The Dictionary of the Notions and Expressions of Islamic Sciences*\*

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**T**HE *Dictionary of the Notions and Expressions of Islamic Sciences*, written by the late Ebrahim Shakourzadeh, the former professor of the University of Meshad, and published in 1996, is the first and still the only bilingual Persian-French dictionary specialized in Islamic terminology, just as the title indicates.

The dictionary transfers the concepts contained in the Qur'an and Islamic texts, referring to suras, hadiths, historical characters or events and geographical places, in French, by placing them, in some cases, in the socio-historical context that gave birth to them. That being said, all the formal and functional equivalents, linguistic and contextual, are made available to the user.

We try, during this article, to concentrate on the study of the translation of proper nouns and the processes applied in this book to see how the new scope of translation studies could be used to revitalize this gigantic work.

### THE PROPER NAME AND ITS TRANSLATION

As for its translation, the definition of the proper name is the subject of controversy. To overcome the shortcomings in the definition of proper names, new theories are less generalizing, more flexible. Thus, Gary-Prieur considering the proper name as a linguistic sign, places it in the context to define it.

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As for its translation, as Vaxelaire points out, "contrary to the idea that the proper noun is untranslatable, the context (and at a higher level the textual genre) often dictates the choice of modifying or preserving a proper name in the target language." (2006, p.593).

For the Dictionary of Shakurzadeh, we notice the strategies of different natures in the translation of these names.

#### STRATEGIES FOR PROPER NAMES TRANSLATION

*Exoticism*: preserving the strangeness of the original word

There are actually different types of translations between Arabic and languages with the Latin alphabet as to the transfer of untranslated terms including proper nouns:

*Transcription*:

Transcription is, according to Ballard, "an attempt to preserve the foreign pronunciation" ((Ballard, 2001, p.27).

ق (قاف) Qaf

*The empirical transcription*:

The empirical transcription is indeed a phonological adaptation of the original word in the target language.

طرابلس Tripoli

*The preservation of the notorious characteristics of the source language such as* ابن ال or ابن:

ابن الاثير (مورخ عرب قرن ششم و هفتم ه.ق.) Ibn al-Athir

*Transcription with explanation of meaning*:

"consists in introducing the contents of a note or a form of commentary into the text beside the proper noun" (Ballard, 2001, p.111).

منا (Valley of) Minâ

*Francization*:

This process is indeed an effort to preserve the foreign name but modified according to a lexical structure specific to the target language.

سربداران Sarbedarians

#### ADJUSTMENT: PRIORITY TO THE MEANING

*The literal translation*:

This process is especially practiced for place names: the names of geographical places, monuments, etc.

مسجد کبود Blue Mosque

*Substitution*:

When there is not an exact equivalent in the target culture, an equivalent that fulfills all the functions of the word of the source language, a form of explanation can be used by the translator.

محشر Gathering of the human race on the Day of Resurrection

*Metonymy*: return to the category of common names:

Another solution that Shakourzadeh uses, despite the inevitable loss of meaning, when the proper name has no equivalent in the target language and culture, is the use of a metonymic term:

سقر Hell

*The use of a cultural reference of the target culture:*

Some proper names belonging to the history of humanity are mentioned by all religions and have exact equivalents in the target culture:

طوفان نوح Flood

Shakurzadeh translated "طوفان نوح" by its equivalent in the Christian religion (Flood).

#### TRANSLATION OF THE PROPER NAME, A CONTROVERSIAL TRANSLATION POLICY

*The choice of process: a challenge for the translator*

As we have seen, the processes of the proper name translation are numerous. But that does not mean that the translator can act as he wants. We have also seen that the criteria for adopting a particular process for a given type of this category, despite the efforts made on this subject, are far from being able to provide a fixed income. Indeed, the proper name, just like the common name, cannot be treated outside of its context.

The proper names of the Shakurzadeh dictionary, even before being placed in a particular context, are in an Islamic matrix, a matrix that imposes constraints to be taken into account by the translator. Even a perfect knowledge of the Islamic specialty language, of course, beside the source language, does not allow the translator to favor one strategy over another. The social dimensions of the employment of the cultural referent in question must also be taken into account.

#### CONCLUSION

During this research, we tried to study all the processes of the proper names translation used in the *Dictionary of Islamic Science notions and expressions*. Given the heterogeneity of the class of the proper name, and that of the theories concerning its translation, we noted various processes in the dictionary.

However, this is not only a question of the point of view of the authors and translators but also the norms of the time.

**Keywords**— Translation, proper name, *Dictionary of the Notions and Expressions of Islamic Sciences*.